

Agricultural Marketing Service  
Office of the Deputy Administrator for Marketing Programs  
Fruit and Vegetable Programs  
PACA Branch  
Regional Office  
GS-303-5/6  
Program Assistant (Office Automation)

**Standard Job FV65L**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

This position is located in the Fruit and Vegetable Program's PACA Branch Regional Office. This Branch is responsible for administering the PACA which is designed to prohibit unfair practices in the marketing of fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables. Firms that are subject to this Act are licensed on an annual basis.

The employee serves as a PACA Program Assistant responsible for carrying out technical duties primarily related to the licensing function in the office including prospecting, reviewing applications, and maintaining the license records of the regional office.

**II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Reviews trade journals, customer lists, broker books, etc., to identify prospective licensees within the region. Prepares and issues letters notifying the individual or company of licensing requirements and procedures. Reviews responses from those industry members claiming that they are not subject to the PACA licensing provisions, determines if a license is required, and informs the prospective licensee. Follows up to insure that a license application is filed when appropriate, and if not, refers the matter to the supervisor or a marketing specialist for further action. Records and updates information regarding license prospects in the Branch database.

Reviews license applications and accompanying data to determine accuracy and completeness of forms. Searches the Branch computer data base to confirm information and resolves discrepancies between information on file and that submitted with the application. Computes licensing fees based on the type of business, number of branches, and length of time in operation. Obtains additional information from applicant, as needed. Calls all problem areas to the attention of the supervisor and to the License and Program Review Section in headquarters. Generates a fee transmittal and deposits the license fees to the lock box in a timely manner. Follows up to obtain replacement of any insufficient fund checks. When fees are paid by a credit card, obtains a credit card authorization number.

Enters data from a completed license application into the Branch's automated database in accordance with established procedures and guidelines. Generates a license certificate that is mailed to the licensee and an internal PACA record certificate for the official Branch license file.

Reviews a variety of documents, including the following, in the course of accomplishing assignments: initial complaint forms, business records such as corporate charters, financial statements, bankruptcy records, court documents dealing with felony convictions, prior affiliation records, historical complaint records, and license applications.

Maintains records of those industries/firms licensed and electronic data base files on prospects and violators within the region. Monitors trade sources on a regular basis to identify changes on existing licenses. Contacts licensees to obtain appropriate information in order to update their license. Records and updates license information in Branch database in accordance with established policies, procedures, and guidelines. If a determination is made that a new license is required follows through to obtain application. Brings unusual circumstances to the supervisor's attention.

Provides information to marketing specialists to determine when investigative trips are necessary and also provides needed information to specialists in travel status.

Receives incoming telephone calls and personal callers which include calls from field officers, other government agencies, and members of industry and the public. Determines the identity of the caller and nature of the call, and screens out calls which can be handled personally by the supervisor's subordinates, or other offices both within and outside the organizational unit.

Adheres to Equal Employment and Civil Rights policies, goals and objectives in performing the duties of this position. Assures that written and oral communications are bias-free and that differences of other employees and clients are respected and valued.

Employee performs a full range of administrative support functions as specified by the Regional Director, such as time and attendance, travel vouchers, monthly reports, procuring and controlling inventory of office supplies, maintaining a log of checks received, and/or processing of accounts payable.

### **III. FACTORS**

#### **A. Knowledge required by the Position**

Thorough familiarity with all rules, regulations, policies, and precedents covering licensing requirements under the PACA as well as relevant court decisions, and various state laws that regulate corporate and partnership structures.

Good working knowledge of the fruit and vegetable industry including but not limited to the trade customs pertinent to the various major commodities, that is, the areas of the country that have commercial production, the seasons of growing and harvesting for those production areas, and the availability of itinerant trade members in those areas. Knowledge of the industry must also extend to the distribution areas and covers such

diverse factors as the emergence of cooperative retail stores, growth in food service systems, and the buying practices of local and state hospitals and school systems.

Knowledge and ability to review and interpret various legal and complex business documents submitted in connection with license applications and reparation complaints.

A thorough working knowledge of the Branch's automated database is required in order to enter, maintain, access, and utilize license files and other data in accordance with established procedures and guidelines. Knowledge of all functions of the office is necessary in order to provide suggestions for procedure or policy changes that would increase efficiency.

Ability to review available information and develop new information sources to pinpoint prospective licensees.

Skill in operating an electric typewriter and a micro-computer for word processing and related functions to prepare own correspondence when necessary and to prepare information for dissemination to marketing specialists. A qualified typist is required.

## **B. Supervisory Controls**

The employee works under the general supervision of the regional director or assistant regional director with a minimum of supervision for routine assignments. The employee is expected to handle most matters on own initiative, including determining what needs to be done and general priorities associated with accomplishing the work. The employee seeks supervisory guidance only in new or complex/sensitive work situations. Completed work assignments are spot-checked for conformance to policy and the degree to which overall expectations are achieved.

## **C. Guidelines**

Guidelines consist of enabling statutes as well as a variety of Branch, Division, and Agency regulations, policies and procedures. Guidelines also include USDA and court precedent decisions involving contracts, agency, and fair trade practice, as well as bankruptcy laws and various State laws. In addition, the incumbent must have good knowledge of the various state laws governing corporate and partnership structures as well as detailed knowledge of the laws in place within the region. The incumbent interprets and applies the guidelines to a variety of different situations. The employee adapts the guidelines to specific cases and one-of-a-kind situations. New interpretations and adaptations are discussed with the supervisor or higher graded marketing specialist prior to application. The employee must be able to locate, gain access to, and use all types of publications, studies, trade journals, and other material generated within the food industry to locate potential PACA licensees, and participate in summarizing/resolving reparation complaints.

## **D. Complexity**

The work involves a variety of work assignments involving unrelated processes. The licensing activities, which comprise the primary focus of the job, range from simple to complex; there is no prescreening function. The incumbent must have sufficient knowledge to determine which case files require interpretation by the regional director, assistant regional director, or consultation with the headquarters office. The interpretations to be made require extensive review of documents. Determinations are based on consideration of the PACA regulations and various state laws. At times, it will be necessary for the employee to review more complex case files involving a greater range of legal instruments or conflicting jurisdictions on the basis of the specific instructions and guidelines furnished by the supervisor.

The review of license applications and determination of license liability can range from the simple to the most complex. At times, there are extremely involved interlocking entities with layer-upon-layer of subsidiaries and related firms, some of which may be subject to license requirements while others are not. Some of these firms may have their major activities in other manufacturing fields and be unfamiliar and hostile to the need for a license. At times, the determination for license eligibility can be influenced by whether the product is moving in interstate commerce or in contemplation of movement in interstate commerce. Further complications can arise from determinations as to whether a particular product has been processed within the meaning of the law or whether it is still subject to the Act.

#### **E. Scope and Effect**

The work is vital to the administration of the law. The substantive work of the position has a direct effect on the degree to which the law is properly administered, as well as the financial interests of the industry members who are impacted by the incumbent's decisions.

#### **F. Personal Contacts**

Primary contacts are with Departmental employees and persons outside the Department including prospective licensees in the fruit and vegetable industry, state, or city officials, and others who may provide license information. These contacts will require tact and diplomacy as well as sufficient expertise to obtain the information required. Trade members can be extremely hostile or argumentative when confronted with the necessity of obtaining a license. On occasion, the incumbent will be required to travel within commuting distance of the office in contacting state and bankruptcy officials, fruit and vegetable commission merchants, brokers, and dealers.

#### **G. Purpose of Contacts**

Contacts are for the purpose of obtaining or providing information necessary to the administration of the licensing provisions of the PACA. Trade members can be extremely hostile or argumentative when confronted with the necessity of obtaining a license. To explain laws, regulations, programs and policy and to answer questions that go beyond procedural aspects.

#### **H. Physical Demands**

The work is sedentary. This may be some walking, standing, bending and carrying of light items such as papers and files.

**I. Work Environment**

The work is performed in an office setting.